

For Immediate Release
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NHLBI's First Grants Supported by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Will Study Lung Diseases

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health today announced that it will award 22 grants totaling \$3.3 million in funds provided from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to focus additional research on two common, yet complex and difficult-to-treat lung diseases. Recovery Act funds will allow a substantial expansion of the institute's lung tissue research program, enabling support for nine more grants than would have been possible with existing funds.

"These important investments through the Recovery Act not only benefit communities by creating additional jobs but also enable us to gain a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms that make these common diseases so very difficult to treat," said NHLBI Director Elizabeth G. Nabel, M.D.

The grant awards, made as part of the NHLBI's Small Grants for Lung Tissue Research program, will provide much needed investments to spur advances in the understanding of complex lung diseases by supporting research in laboratories in 16 states - Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas.

The new research will focus on two lung diseases that are a major cause of disability and death - chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). In comparison with other chronic diseases, much less is known about the underlying biology of COPD and IPF. Using small tissue samples obtained from volunteer donors during surgery, investigators will examine the molecular pathways involved in the development and progression of these diseases, which will lead to better understanding of and improved treatments for them.

The fourth leading cause of death in the United States, COPD is a progressive lung disease that, over time, makes it hard to breathe. It affects an estimated 24 million Americans, with more than 12 million currently diagnosed and another 12 million who remain undiagnosed despite recognizable symptoms. About 120,000 Americans die of COPD each year. The condition - also called emphysema or chronic bronchitis - typically affects people over 45, especially those who smoke or have smoked, and those with risk factors associated with genetics or environmental exposures.

IPF is a debilitating condition in which tissue deep in the lungs becomes thick and stiff, or scarred. Over time, as the lung scarring, or fibrosis, gets thicker, the lungs lose their ability to move oxygen into the bloodstream, and breathing capacity is reduced. In most cases, pulmonary fibrosis is - idiopathic - meaning it is of unknown cause. About 200,000 Americans have IPF, with the condition mostly affecting people 50 to 75 years of age. There is no cure for IPF; many people with the condition live only about three to five years after diagnosis, often dying of respiratory failure.

The grantee institutions for the Lung Tissue Research program are:

Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston
Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
Emory University, Atlanta
Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston
Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, Rochester, Minn.
Meharry Medical College, Nashville, Tenn.
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N.C.
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
Oklahoma State University, Tulsa, Okla.
Rush University Medical Center, Chicago
Temple University, Philadelphia
Tulane University, New Orleans, La.

University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Ala.
University of Chicago, Chicago
University of Colorado, Aurora, Colo.
University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky.
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh
University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler, Texas
University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, Texas

The activities described in this release are supported by funds provided to the NIH under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). More information about NIH's Recovery Act grant funding opportunities can be found at <http://grants.nih.gov/recovery/>. To track the progress of HHS activities funded through the Recovery Act, visit

www.hhs.gov/recovery

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www.recovery.gov

Part of the National Institutes of Health, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) plans, conducts, and supports research related to the causes, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart, blood vessel, lung, and blood diseases, and sleep disorders. The Institute also administers national health education campaigns on women and heart disease, healthy weight for children, and other topics. NHLBI press releases, information on NHLBI's role in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and other materials are available online at www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) - *The Nation's Medical Research Agency* - includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov